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UNCLAS OTTAWA 001248

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR DRL (KARI JOHNSTONE AND DAVID DENEHY) AND WHA/CAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KDEM PREL CA

SUBJECT: CANADA: RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES ELECTION STANDARDS INITIATIVE

REF: A. STATE 071948

1B. OTTAWA 001175

¶1. (SBU) Poloff delivered the demarche (per ref a) outlining a USG initiative to develop universal election standards that will be presented at the April 28-30 Community of Democracies (CD) Ministerial in Santiago, to Jessica Blitt, Policy Advisor in the Peacebuilding and Human Security Division at Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC), on April 20. Blitt thanked us for the opportunity to review our initiative before the CD Ministerial, indicated that she would pass the points as appropriate within FAC, and advised that the Canadian delegation to the conference would likely be headed by Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, Director General of the Global Issues Branch at FAC.

¶2. (SBU) Continuing, she also said that Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Chief Elections Officer at Elections Canada, may attend as well, given his interest in the issues described in the USG proposal. In a separate conversation with poloff, Diane Davidson, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer at Elections Canada, advised that Kingley would like to attend, if there is a meaningful role for him at the conference. However, Davidson noted that the possibility that a parliamentary election might be called could preclude Kingsley from traveling abroad during this timeframe.

¶3. (SBU) Charge spoke with both Peter Harder, Deputy Foreign Minister, and Jonathan Fried, Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister, to press the GoC to send a more senior representative, emphasizing that Secretary Rice would be announcing the initiative in Santiago and that the CD Ministerial was aligned closely with Canada's new International Policy Statement (published last week).

¶4. (SBU) As indicated ref b, Harder reiterated that it was unlikely that Foreign Minister Pierre Pettigrew would be able to attend, given the ongoing parliamentary crisis and the possibility that the minority Liberal government may fall at any point. (Note: Harder himself is scheduled to be in Berlin during the timeframe of the CD Ministerial). Fried agreed that the GoC should be represented at a higher level, and will work the issue from the Privy Council Office.

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